

## **Defining the Challenge**

The criminal justice and corrections costs associated with seriously mentally ill (SMI) offenders may represent a misallocation of scarce resources and space.

## **Costs to California Courts**

- Cost of prosecuting SMI offenders is \$79.2 million to \$118.8 million.
- Cost of defending SMI offenders is \$34.8 million to \$52.2 million.
- Court costs of handling mentally ill offenders (MIOs) are \$140 million to \$210 million.

## **Costs to Law Enforcement**

- 10 percent of arrestees are SMI.
- 7.2 to 15 percent of county jail inmates are SMI.
- 72,000 MIOs are in California jails (fourth nationally).
- Cost to California police departments of handling MIOs is \$445 million; cost to county sheriffs is \$160 million.
- Jail and probation costs of handling MIOs are \$58.4 million to \$118 million.

## **Costs to the Corrections System**

- 8 to 20 percent of state prison inmates are SMI.
- An estimated 11,300 to 28,600 prison inmates are SMI.
- State corrections cost of handling SMI persons is \$245 million to \$619 million.

## **Costs of Outpatient Treatment**

- Nationally, the annual average cost of providing comprehensive mental health service to an SMI person is \$7,000. Of that, \$3,000 may be provided for by federal matching funds.
- \$4,000 per person is the cost to the county and the state.
- For more treatment-resistant SMI persons, the annual average cost of treatment ranges between \$15,000 and \$20,000. Approximately 40 percent of those costs are met with federal funds.
- \$9,000 to \$12,000 is the annual cost per person to the county and the state.
- Inmate per capita cost is \$21,600 annually.

Taken from L. Izumi, J.D., M. Schiller, M.D., and S. Hayward, Ph.D., *Corrections, Criminal Justice, and the Mentally Ill: Some Observations About Costs in California* (San Francisco: Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy, September 1996).